



President
Marlene De Bellis

CEO
Kathleen Deschenes

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Kathryn Loga, LCSW, Program Director of Connecticut Renaissance's McAuliffe Center, which is a residential co-occurring program for males above the age of 18. In 2015 my journey began at CT Renaissance as a clinical intern with the fundamental dream and desire to help others make significant life changes necessary to get them on the path to recovery. I quickly learned while working in this field that supplies were limited, staff shortages were normal, clinical efficiency was not the same program to program meaning that without proper continuity of care, these clients may again end up back on our doorstep before we know it.

Our program is just one of two state funded nonprofit programs in Connecticut offering residential intensive treatment to males whom suffer from both addiction and mental health issues. On the macro level of service programs and equity, non-profit programs suffer with regard to the income that is received in order to ensure that clients and staff are adequately funded. The difference of what is deemed necessary to make a program successful, is counterintuitive of what is actually crucial to maintaining the day to day operational functions of our program. If you ask our clients what our biggest problem is, they'll say, "the food stinks", but realistically it is so much more than that. In the past year we have seen the highest recidivism rate of clients which was highly impacted by COVID-19 and statewide shutdowns. We have seen a substantial increase of drug overdoses, client deaths, as well as suicide attempts. Now more than ever, individuals are reporting their struggles with maintaining positive mental health, not even including those that provide services. During the pandemic, our program has shifted, but our clinical services never faltered in meeting ethical standard and statewide client centered practices.

Speaking for myself, I have had to work 2 full-time jobs, 90 hours a week, all while raising a 1-year-old baby, and attempting to maintain family relationships, just to compensate for the low wages that non-profit programs offer. In high school, "they" (parents, teachers, government leaders, school officials, etc.), will endorse the positive impact of gaining college education and post-secondary credits/training needed to be clinically licensed in order to provide services to the communities. What "they" didn't tell me, was that I would be sitting on a large sum of student loan debt that I most likely would be paying off for the rest of my life due to high interest rates and low income received in the social services field. "They" will say, "Well, you knew what you were getting into", and sure enough I did, I guess I didn't know just how bad it was.

To conclude with a quote from the late social worker, Jane Addams, "Nothing can be worse than the fear that one had given up too soon, and left one unexpended effort which might have saved the world". In essence, no social worker should fear whether or not they will be able to pay their gas bill, electricity bill, mortgage/rent, phone bill etc. when the greater good of services that is being provided to citizens, is what makes Connecticut a safe and economically sound state to reside. Most of us live paycheck to paycheck, despite knowing what we do, is from the heart.

A lack of human services workers can put lives and families at risk if people urgently needing vital support cannot access essential services. If the helpers aren't there to help, then essential care is delayed or even denied, compromising health and safety. The consequences have proven to be dire. Please consider increasing the cost of living increase TODAY!

Sincerely,
Kathryn Loga, LCSW

70 Central Avenue • Waterbury, CT 06702
Tel: (203) 346-1931 • Fax: (203) 346-1935
www.ctrenaissance.com